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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2005

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BRIEFING

Erdogan: Turkey May Launch Cross-Border Operations Against
PKK: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told CNN-Turk yesterday
that, if it becomes necessary, Turkey may launch a cross-
border operation against the terrorist PKK. Asked to
comment on claims that the US was opposed to a Turkish cross-
border operation against the PKK, Erdogan said he did not
anticipate opposition from the Americans. 'International
law grants Turkey the right to cross-border operations, and
if conditions necessitate it may happen,' Erdogan said. He
warned against the support the PKK has been receiving from
'outside.' 'You cannot fight terrorism by merely putting a
terrorist organization on your terror list. I'm saying this
not only in connection with the United States, but in
connection with European countries as well,' Erdogan
emphasized. The Turkish prime minister criticized European
politicians for visiting eastern and southeastern provinces
in Turkey rather than Ankara. 'They go to Hakkari,
Diyarbakir, and Mardin. Fine. But what is their reason for
going there? If they want to talk to us, they must come to
Ankara,' Erdogan said.

Meanwhile, CHP leader Deniz Baykal slammed the AKP
government for being 'incapable' of taking 'cross-border
measures' against terrorism. Baykal pointed to rising
terror in east and southeast Turkey, and said that it was
the responsibility of the United States, Britain, and the
Iraqi government to take measures against the PKK presence
in northern Iraq, from where militants infiltrate into
Turkey for attacks. Baykal also said that the government
had not shown sufficient determination to counter terrorism
after al-Qaeda's terrorist bombings in Istanbul in November
2003. 'Hizbullah-style terrorism has become a tradition in
Turkey,' Baykal said. 'This terrorism follows the path of
al-Qaeda terrorism. A recent provision on illegal religious
schools and several other adopted laws have fed terrorism in
Turkey,' Baykal noted.

US Official: Security Operations Against PKK is Turkey's
Right: An unidentified US official is reported by papers as
saying that Turkey has the right to launch military
operations against the PKK within its own borders, providing

it brings no large-scale violation of human rights. The official noted that US attitudes may change if violations of human rights increase, but added that under the present circumstances, the US has no objections to Turkish measures against terrorism. Most dailies comment ironically that Turkey should be 'grateful' for the 'approval' given by the US for internal military operations. Analysts see no change regarding US 'inaction' against the PKK presence in northern Iraq. They quote past US remarks stating that the priority of coalition forces is to fight insurgency in Iraq, and that the PKK presence in northern Iraq, a relatively stable part of the country, will be eliminated at a suitable time.

Ankara Officially Demands Extradition of Istanbul Bombers: Ankara announced on Wednesday that it had asked Iraq on June 13 to extradite Burhan Kus and Sadettin Aktas, two Turkish fundamentalists suspected of taking part in the November 2003 bombings of synagogues and British interests in Istanbul, papers report. Kus and Aktas are reportedly being held in Abu Ghraib prison. Dailies also report that Muhammet Tokac, another suspect in the Istanbul bombings, has been captured by US troops in Baghdad. A Turkish Justice Ministry official said that Iraqi officials had not yet replied to the extradition request, and that the return of the suspects might be delayed if American or Israeli intelligence agents want to interrogate them before they are deported. Otherwise, the extradition procedures will be concluded within a month. Some papers claim that the Iraqi Supreme Court will decide on the extradition. The US Embassy in Ankara declined comment, saying that the issue would be dealt with between Iraq and Turkey. Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman Namik Tan said yesterday that Turkey has always sought help from the US in preventing terrorism, so it would be 'only natural' for Washington to help secure the speedy return of the two suspects. In Istanbul, the suspects' lawyer applied to the authorities yesterday for his clients' extradition to Turkey.

Turkey Hosts 'Secret' Iraq Meeting: "Radikal" claims that representatives of ethnic groups in the Iraqi parliament and Iraqi Kurdish constitutional law experts met with Turkish diplomats in Abant on Tuesday to discuss the draft Iraqi constitution, which is to be finalized by August 18. Among the Iraqi participants who met with Turkey's special Iraq envoy Osman Koruturk and MFA Iraq Desk Director Huseyin Avni Botsali were Shiite lawmaker Abbas Beyati, Turkmen lawmaker Riyas Sarikahya, Justice Ministry U/S Ismet Abdulmecit, formerly exiled MP Gassen Atiye, and representatives of Shiite leader Muktada al-Sadr. The Turks told the Iraqis that Kirkuk should be given a special status, that elements which may divide Iraq should not be included in the constitution, and that the Turkmen should be included among the 'main elements' of the country along with Kurds and Arabs.

Turkey Not Among al-Qaeda Targets in Short Term: A commentary in today's "Cumhuriyet" claims that Turkey is unlikely to be targeted again by al-Qaeda in the short term, but that there is a long-term potential threat due to ' sleeper cells ' in the country. Turkish al-Qaeda members have retreated underground, the paper argues, pointing out that there are some 10,000 Turkish Hizbullah members across the country who can be easily used by al-Qaeda. Turkey's decision to refrain from giving direct support to coalition forces in Iraq, and the Turkish public's reaction to the killing of civilians in and around Baghdad will keep al-Qaeda's 'death trucks' away in the short term, according to the commentary.

Lawmakers Searched by US Security Before Traveling to US: Opposition CHP lawmaker Yakup Kepenek submitted on Wednesday an inquiry to the Minister of Transportation asking whether searches of bags by Turkish travelers going through the VIP lounge by security guards hired by Americans was allowed by an agreement with the United States. A group of ruling AKP and opposition CHP lawmakers and their wives were reportedly searched at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport before departing for the US to attend an OSCE summit meeting earlier this month.

'Diyanet' Reaction to London Bombings: "Zaman" reports that Professor Ali Bardakoglu, head of the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet), said that the bombers in last week's attacks in London had betrayed their own religion. Bardakoglu warned that the attacks in London will damage the interests of Muslims living in European countries. 'Some mosques have already become targets of attacks. Troubles await Muslims living in Europe,' he said. "Yeni Safak" carries remarks by Islamic scholars from around the world condemning last week's terror attacks in London. The clerics said that Islamic law forbids the killing of innocent people even during times of war.

Italian FM Visits Turkey: On Wednesday, Italian Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini met with President Sezer, Prime Minister Erdogan, and Foreign Minister Gul during his two-day state visit to Turkey. At a joint press conference with

Gul, Fini called for 'maximum cooperation' against terror, adding that Turkey's role in such cooperation would be important. Fini stressed that targets like synagogues were deliberately picked by terrorists for their symbolic significance. Gul said that trade between the two countries had reached 11.5 billion USD, not to mention a 2 billion USD of Italian investments in Turkey. Gul thanked Fini for Italy's support for Turkey's EU membership, and voiced the belief that President Azeglio Ciampi's state visit to Turkey scheduled for November will further strengthen ties.

Ankara Condemns Attack in Netanya: The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) condemned the terrorist suicide attack in the Israeli resort of Netanya on Tuesday, which killed several Israelis and injured many more. 'Such terrorist actions are aimed at disrupting peace at a time of increasing efforts in that direction,' the MFA said in a statement. The MFA appealed for calm in the face of 'terrorist provocations.'

Fighting Puts off Investments in Southeast Turkey: "Cumhuriyet" reports that Sahismail Bedirhanoglu, head of the southeastern industrialists' association, GUNSIAD, claimed that some 130 million USD in foreign investment projects in southeast Turkey had been shelved because of an upsurge in separatist violence in recent months. 'We can't expect foreigners to invest here under the present conditions,' Bedirhanoglu said. He called for an immediate end to the fighting.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

"Is There The Possibility of War With the US?!" Sami Kohen wrote in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (7/14): "According to a survey carried out by the Ari Movement, 35 percent of the Turkish people believe that Turkey and the US are moving closer to a war. Could bilateral relations really be so bad that a significant number of Turks are convinced that there is a good chance of war with America? The survey shows that there is some anti-American sentiment in Turkey, but the respondents attribute this sentiment more to President Bush and his policies than to the American people. In general, Turkish people still have positive views about the American lifestyle, culture, education, etc.. But they strongly oppose President Bush's policies in Iraq and the region. The concerns about a possible war with the US indicate that there is serious mistrust and fear among the Turkish public. One reason for this could be disinformation and the populist actions of the government and its politicians. All of this has led the people to demand changes in Turkish foreign policy. The Turkish people favor a more determined policy that does not give concessions to outsiders. There are many lessons that politicians and especially the Government could learn from this survey. As former President Suleyman Demirel said in the past: 'those running a State should never yield to the feelings of people in the street. If and when it is necessary, those in power should face the public and explain the truth.'"

"Learn to be Grateful for Even This Much" Oktay Eksi commented in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (7/14): "According to the Anatolian News Agency, an anonymous American official graciously acknowledged that it is the right of the Turkish Armed Forces to conduct military operations against the PKK within Turkish territory. As you all know, the US is very sensitive (!) on the issue of human rights. So this same official did not hesitate to add that this permission could be revoked if there are large-scale violation of human rights by the Turkish Armed Forces. It's as if this official believes that torture centers like Guantanamo, Abu-Ghraib, and the prisons in Afghanistan are run by the Turks. According to AA, US officials are stressing that the US considers the PKK a terrorist organization, but because of the limited number of US troops in Northern Iraq, the US cannot take necessary steps against the PKK there. The officials believe, however, that the PKK will not be allowed to survive in the region. Who is kidding whom? Didn't the US, during the Clinton Administration, urge all countries to coordinate in fighting terrorism no matter where the terrorists are? Didn't we all witness the countless times that President Bush has guaranteed the elimination of terrorists? How many years have passed since the US announced that the PKK is a terrorist organization? The US promised to Turkey before and after the operation against Iraq it would cooperate with Turkey in the fight against the PKK. We all remember that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, during her visit to Turkey in February 2005, said that there are many non-military ways to deal with the PKK, and that the organization's financial resources could be eliminated through Turkey-US cooperation. But then it took over four months for the US Administration to send a treasury undersecretary to discuss the issue. Didn't the US Administration order its forces in Iraq to arrest 150 PKK members? When is Turkey going to understand

what our strategic partner (!) is trying to tell us: `we are not going to do anything for you on this issue. Take care of the problem for yourselves.'"

MCELDOWNEY